

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



GIS Council (GISC)

Charter

PREFACE

Geographic Information Systems have been used by the NPS since the mid-1970's when Yosemite and Great Smokey Mountains national parks embarked upon GIS projects. Today the NPS utilizes 1,200 GIS software licenses, 500 global positioning systems (GPS) and numerous related spatial technologies.

The NPS has developed a program to help parks build GIS databases and to provide the expertise needed to use GIS to support decision making. The GIS Program provides a technical support network and coordinates GIS use throughout the parks. The Program is organized into three levels: a national program which includes the GIS Coordinators Offices and service-wide programs that use GIS to manage park resources e.g. natural and cultural resources (National Trails System, Fire Management, etc.) regional technical support centers, and park-based GISs.

The three levels function both independently and collectively. With guidance provided by a group of senior GIS professionals consisting of; regional GIS Coordinators, NPS GIS Coordinator, Natural Resources GIS Coordinator, Cultural Resource GIS Coordinator, Lands Office representation and others. This group met at least annually to discuss GIS issues, determine budget strategies, and strategically guide GIS since the late-1980's. With advances in technology in the late-1990's the capability to implement enterprise type GIS systems within the National Park system has become possible. The GIS coordinators have recognized an increased demand from parks for this type of GIS application. In order to support implementation of enterprise GIS, senior GIS professionals realized the need to formalize their group into a GIS Council.

Toward this end, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Dom Nessi, recommended the formalization of the GIS Council at a strategic planning meeting of senior GIS professionals at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in October of 2001. Formalizing a GIS Council will help to ensure the implementation of integrated enterprise GIS throughout the NPS.

I. PURPOSE OF THE GIS COUNCIL:

The purpose of the GIS Council is to provide strategic leadership for the National Park Service (NPS) GIS Program. This will include implementation of GIS, information systems and related technology plans, providing direction on policy, programs, initiatives, funding priorities, organizational needs, as well as coordinating GIS activities among parks, regions, and program areas.

II. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF GIS COUNCIL:

1. **COMMUNICATION:** Facilitate and serve as a focal point for communications about GIS issues, programs, policies, budgets and budget initiatives internally and with other agencies and external partners.
2. **BUDGET:** Review budget processes (OFS, PMIS, and initiatives) to ensure that GIS needs and priorities are incorporated and adequately considered. Develop recommendations to improve and strengthen the processes and databases on a continuing basis. Develop national GIS budget priorities based on the National GIS Strategic Plan when completed.
3. **STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Develop and maintain a National GIS Strategic Plan. The strategic plan will identify national priorities that will be taken into consideration during annual budget processes. Serve as the focal point for integrating park, regional, and national perspectives in the development of NPS GIS goals and objectives.
4. **ADVISORY ROLE:** Serves as a source of recommendations to the NPS CIO, Director, and the NLC on the long-term strategies and priorities for GIS Program direction.
5. **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH:** Identify internal GIS training needs, and plan or make recommendations for the development and presentation of training in cooperation with other groups or agencies.
6. **INTEGRATION:** Review and promote the implementation of NPS information and application systems to promote geographic data as a framework for the broadest integration of databases and systems.
7. **DATA MANAGEMENT, SHARING, DEVELOPMENT, STANDARDS:** Facilitate the sharing of and open access to NPS data. Provide support and leadership in the development of data, metadata and standards. Provide guidance on protocols for spatial data management, spatial analysis, mapping, etc.
8. **GIS TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** Provide guidance and direction for all technical support centers to ensure adequate GIS support is provided to all units of the NPS.

9. **APPLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT:** Provides coordination and consultation in development of applications for distribution throughout the NPS.
10. **REWARDS AND RECOGNITION:** Develop recommendations to reward and acknowledge special efforts and achievements in GIS throughout the NPS. Ensure NPS directorate is aware of and acknowledges special GIS efforts.
11. **NPS GIS CONFERENCE:** Sponsors and organizes national GIS conferences on a regular basis, normally in alternate years from the George Wright Society conferences. Encourages regional, cross-regional, and cross-program conferences whenever possible.
12. **SPECIAL ISSUES:** Upon request of the NPS CIO, Director, or NLC explores and analyzes issues and makes recommendations to address such.

III. MEMBERSHIP

A. The GISC will consist of the following representatives:

Permanent Members:

- Regional GIS Coordinators – 9
(Northeast and Pacific West have 2 each; all other Regions have 1 each)
- WASO Program GIS Coordinators – Lands, Fire, Cultural and Natural Resources – 4
- National GIS Program Manager - 1
- Chief Information Officer - 1
- Deputy Chief Information Officer for Information Systems – 1

Rotational Members:

- Web Council member – 1
- Network Data Manager from Inventory & Monitoring Program - 1
- Park Superintendent - 1
- Park GIS staff – 1

MAXIMUM OF 20 REGULAR MEMBERS

B. Membership Criteria:

- A strong interest in advancing GIS integration to assist park managers in making better-informed decisions;
- Visionary, demonstrated ability to ‘think outside the box’, beyond the boundaries and collaboratively;
- A good team player
- Positive, constructive thinker
- Capable of representing the interests of your constituency
- Supervisory approval for the rotational members
- Able to commit up to 10 percent of the year on GIS Council meetings and assignments. In some years and certain situations, the time commitment may exceed 10 percent.

C. Task Groups may be formed and may request the assistance of subject-matter experts on an *ad hoc* basis.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Leadership for the GISC will consist of a Chair and Vice Chair. The GISC Chair for the 2002 calendar year will be Leslie Armstrong, the GIS National Program Manager. The term of office for the chair will be one year. After 2002, the GISC Chair responsibilities will rotate amongst the Regional GIS Coordinators. The order of rotation selected is as follows: Midwest, Pacific West, Alaska, Southeast, Intermountain, Northeast, and National Capitol. Council members agree that during their term as GISC Chair, they will not serve as leadership on other committees and will limit their commitment to other committees and programs in order to fully support the Chair and fully serve their role as GISC Chair.

Permanent members are required to attend all annual meetings. Regions and programs will appoint a new GISC permanent member should the present member leave their current position. Rotational members should attend as many meetings as possible and will serve a term of two years on the GIS Council. Teleconferences will be conducted on a quarterly basis and more frequently as needed.

V. GIS COUNCIL CHAIR FUNCTIONS

- A. Work closely and regularly communicate with the CIO and GIS Program manager.
- B. Organize the twice per year meetings including on-site and travel logistics, agenda, guest speakers, reporting of action items and minutes.
- C. Call for additional meetings and teleconferences as needed.
- D. Approve and coordinate work group activities, tasks, and recommendations.

VI. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The GISC will make decisions by consensus among the permanent and rotational council members. At least half plus one of the voting (permanent and rotational) council members must participate in the decision making process to constitute a quorum. Subject matter experts or other individuals invited on an *ad hoc* basis will provide information or recommendations but are not involved in the decision making or voting process.

VII. WORK GROUPS

Work groups may be established by the GISC to address specific issues that can be resolved within short, finite time frames. The composition of work groups will represent different geographic and organizational perspectives and may include personnel from a variety of agencies and organization. Work group reports and recommendations will be submitted to the GISC for approval and/or further action. The GISC will identify a liaison to any work groups it establishes.

VIII. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held semi-annually. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed to complete the tasks and projects assigned to the council by the CIO and National GIS Program Manager. Additional meetings may be conducted in person or by conference call. Meetings will be arranged and facilitated by the Chair and Vice Chair with input and support by all members.

IX. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the GISC meeting notes, council and task group reports, and appropriate correspondence are distributed to council members and CIO. The minutes of the meeting, including decisions and action items, will be posted to NPS GIS Web site no later than one month after the meeting.

The CIO and Chair (and/or the Vice Chair) are responsible for presenting recommendations, reports and budget requests to the Director and other NPS Managers or leadership boards.

X. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Support for task groups, advisors, council activities, and necessary acquisitions will be developed by the GISC and included in the annual budget submitted by the CIO. Routine costs of permanent members will be borne by their individual home unit account. Travel costs for rotational members may be covered by ITC as needed.

XI. APPROVAL

This charter is effective as of the date signed and approved by the CIO. This charter is valid for five years from the date signed unless revised or discontinued. This charter can be revised upon the recommendation of a majority of the GISC members or upon request of the CIO.

Recommended: _____ Date: _____
GIS Council Chair

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Chief Information Officer

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Deputy Director